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THE
ROYAL SIN:
OR,
ADULTERY REBUK'D
IN A
GREAT KING.

BEING A
DISCOURSE from the following Text:

*And Nathan said unto David, THOU art
the Man, 2 Sam. xii. 7.*

Deliver'd in the Parish of St. Martin's, and
published at the unanimous Request of the
Congregation.

Addressed to those whom it may concern,

By J. T. D. D. *Joseph Thompson*



L O N D O N:

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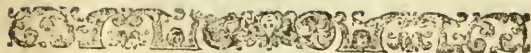
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T H E
R O Y A L S I N :
O R,
A D U L T E R Y R E B U K ' D .

*And Nathan said unto David, Thou art
the Man, 2 Sam. xii. 7.*



THE Sentence I have made use of to introduce this Discourse was the Application of a well-con-
trived Parable, and was thun-
dered into the Ears of a *King*,
and a *great King* too, upon his being notori-
ously guilty of the foul Sin of *Adultery*; which,
tho' a Crime of the blackest Die, has been
countenanced by the Example of *other Kings*
since *David*. Indeed this Vice has in all Ages
and in *almost* all Nations been so unhappily the
Practice of Kings and Princes (saying those
most religious ones, whom propitious Heaven
has continu'd to bless this Isle with) they look-
A 2 ing

ing upon it as a considerable Branch of their Prerogative, that it may justly insist upon being dignified above its Fellows, and lay claim to the *Title* I have here given it of ROYAL. Yet Cause of great Lamentation it is, that a Crime which is the most sensibly injurious both to the private Subject and the Publick, which breaks the very first Bonds of all Society asunder, should be recommended and kept in Countenance by those who are at the Helm of Society, who are appointed to make Laws against these very Transgressions they are guilty of, and are ready enough to punish others for what they themselves *publickly* and with Impunity commit. The Consequences of which are so very fatal, that I think I cannot better employ my Time than in furnishing out a proper Caution, from this Story of King *David*, to all who may be in Power and Authority amongst us, to avoid and fly from such an enormous Sin; or, if ever they should unfortunately happen to be entangled in this Snare, to redeem themselves from the Thralldom with the utmost Contrition, and break away at once from the insidious Arms of the *strange Woman*: And let all Princes and Magistrates, who are guilty of *David's* Crime, follow his Behaviour upon being reprov'd for it; for as soon as *Nathan* had said, *Thou art the Man*,----- He replied, immediately, under a vast Surprize of Grief

Grief and Confusion, ----- *I have sinned against the Lord!*

Which meek and humble Deportment of a great King (who might have been tempted to think himself above Controul) under the Conviction of a Crime, is an excellent Pattern for all those to imitate, who fall under Correction for any Misbehaviour. They should learn from hence, never to stand up in Justification of that, which they know is not to be defended; never to harden their Faces against Reproof, or under Chastisement; nor ever to take up undue Resentments against those who administer the same.

Now the Case of *David* was as follows.

The King, from the Roof of his House, had chanced to see *Bathsheba*, the beautiful Wife of *Uriah*, as she was washing herself one Evening; and upon the Sight of her grew enamour'd with unlawful Love; and without once considering how great the Wickedness would be, how irreparable the Injury to his loyal Subject her Husband, he straight dispatched trusty Messengers (seldom wanted for such vile Purposes) to win her to his Pleasure: She, a frail Woman, soon yielded to the powerful Temptation; and the Fruit soon after appeared to their Shame, for ere long she proved with Child by him.

And now the Crime of a defiled Bed was like to be too flagrant to be much longer conceal'd,

ceal'd, unless the Husband could be call'd in in good Time to cover it. But he, either in his Simplicity not suspecting, or in his *Cunning dissembling* the Injury that had been done him, unluckily disappointed the King's Design.

I can't indeed think the *latter* to be the Reason, for 'tis impossible that such a gallant Man and brave Soldier as *Uriah* could be guilty of so mean, so dastardly an Action as to *wink* at the Defilement of his Bed, tho' done by his *King*; or to be a kind of negative *Pimp* either thro' Fear, or for the *Sake of Lucre*. If this had been the Case, he would have, perhaps, fairly brought her and offer'd up the *willing* Sacrifice *himself*: This therefore could not be *Uriah's* Case, and I hope there never was in the World a *Creature* so groveling, so infamous a Paltroon, whose Case it could be; if there was, I should think *that Man* very justly deserved *Uriah's* Fate. But to proceed,

David, out of a counterfeit Tendernefs, was willing to dispense with the Attendance of his faithful Servant; and send him to repose himself at his own House after his Journey: But *Uriah* said unto *David*, *The Ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in Tents, and my Lord Joab, and the Servants of my Lord are encamped in open Fields: Shall I then go into mine House, to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my Wife? As thou livest, and as thy Soul liveth, I will not do this Thing.*

Thus

Thus was the first Plot defeated, but most unluckily for *Uriah*: For it was soon succeeded by another, and a much more fatal Stratagem. This loyal Heart, not capable so much as of thinking Evil of his Prince, was presently sent back to the Army, with a Sentence of Death against himself. The Instructions he carried to the General were, that the innocent *Uriah* should be set in the fore Front of the hottest Battle, and left exposed to the thickest Shot of the Enemy. And so he fell a destin'd Victim, not so much to the Force of the *Ammonites*, as the Cruelty of King *David*, who, following the Suggestions of an unbridl'd Lust, (of all wicked Counsellors the worst) heaped Murder upon Adultery.

And now the Mouth of all Complaint being stopped, as he imagined, and every Obstacle removed, as soon as the Mock-solemnity of Mourning was over, he made the *Adulteress* his lawful Wife, highly satisfied, no doubt, with the undisturb'd Possession of the Woman whom so many Difficulties had endear'd to him. *But what the King had done displeased the Lord.* This Dream of Satisfaction lasted not long, he was awakened out of it by a startling Message from God, which, under the Covert of a Parable, entered into the very Secrets of his Heart, made him see the Filth and Corruption of it with his own Eyes, and detest and pronounce Sentence against it with his own Lips.

The

The Manner of the Prophet's Address, and the Effect of it, the sacred Story thus relates: *And the Lord sent Nathan unto David, and he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two Men in one City, the one rich, and the other poor. The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds: But the poor Man had nothing save one little Ew-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: And it grew up together with him, and with his Children; it did eat of his own Meat and drank of his own Cup, and lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a Daughter. And there came a Traveller unto the rich Man, and he spared to take of his own Flock and of his own Herd to dress for the wayfaring Man, that was come unto him, but took the poor Man's Lamb, and dressed it for the Man that was come to him. And David's Anger was greatly kindled against the Man, and he said to Nathan, as the Lord liveth, the Man that did this Thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the Lamb four-fold, because he did this Thing, and because he had no Pity.*

Thus spake David, as an Angel of God to discern Good from Evil, whilst fir'd with just Indignation to see this cruel Oppressor punished with the utmost Severity; when lo! to his great Surprise, he finds it bitterly retorted upon himself: And Nathan said to David, THOU ART THE MAN: " Even, that merciless, " that pitiless Man, whom thou hast pronounc'd " not

“ not worthy to live: For, hot as thine An-
 “ ger is at present, hotter was thy Lust that
 “ moved thee to take, not an *Ew-lamb* from
 “ poor *Uriah*, but the *Wife* out of his Bosom.
 “ What Injury can be more irreparable, what
 “ Oppression more barbarous, than that which
 “ thou hast been guilty of? Look no farther
 “ therefore, but turn the Edge of thy Zeal
 “ against thyself: For *thou art the very Man*,
 “ that worst of Oppressors; that Adulterer,
 “ that Murderer, who, by the Words of thine
 “ own Mouth, most justly deserves to die.”

How ready was this King to condemn, how
 zealous to punish an unmerciful Oppressor, not
 knowing who he was, (for the Person was but
 feign'd) and yet how quietly could he tolerate
 in himself both the Adulterer and Murderer?
 How securely could he take Pleasure in a Wo-
 man whom he knew to be the Spoil of another
 Man's Bed, and could not otherwise make his
 own, than by compassing the Death of her
 Husband? And he who was so tenderly sen-
 sible of what the poor Man was supposed to
 suffer, in having the *Ew-Lamb* he had so care-
 fully foster'd, made a Dish at his Neighbour's
 Table; he, I say, could not possibly be igno-
 rant, (and therefore how could he be insen-
 sible?) how much more the injur'd *Uriah* suf-
 fer'd; in having the beauteous *Bathsheba* ravish'd
 from him, by his KING, to whom he might
 not say, WHAT DOEST THOU?

There was no Room for Comparison between two Injuries of a Size so very unequal. The King could not but know full well, had he the least attended to it, that the Wife one loves is as near and dear to a Man, as his own Heart, that the Property of the Marriage-bed is the most precious, the most sacred of all others; that a Wound in that nicest Part of Honour pierces the very Soul, that it bleeds inwardly, is born with Impatience, and heal'd, if at all, with exceeding Difficulty; but that for the most part it imbitters all the Enjoyments, and destroys all the Comforts of Life. Which last, tho' the greatest Aggravation of the Dishonour done to a Man's Bed, is one of the *two* only palliative Excuses that could have been made for the Cruelty of murdering *Uriah*: For it might be said with something of Truth (void of all Pity, as the Murderer was) that it was so much the less cruel to take away a Life which before he had rendred joyless and comfortless.

The other Excuse is, that *David* had still *Grace enough* left to be *ashamed* of his Guilt, tho' he had not enough to quit the *continuing* in it; he knew, that, if the Husband lived, the *Affair* must become *publick*, which he justly thought would appear so vile and scandalous in the Eyes of the World; would be of such manifest *bad Example* to his Subjects, and such a *Reproach* to his own royal Character and Office;

that

that he trembled at the Thoughts of it. He had not so far thrown off all Sense of *Shame*, all Regard to the *Morals* of his People, or the *Laws* of the Country he reigned over, as to triumph in his Iniquity, to proclaim his Crime by *Sound* of *Trumpet*, and to declare with a loud Voice at the *Head* of his *Troops*, I AM THE MAN. He thought this would have been *establishting* and *dignifying* of *Vice* in so flagrant a Manner, and would have been of such high *ill Tendency*, that even taking away the Life of a single Man seem'd less criminal. But as the Case was utterly incapable of any *Palliation*, 'tis marvellous the King should not see, without being shewn, how irreparable the Injury was, of which he had been guilty. In the Heat of his Indignation against a supposed Oppressor, he put on the Severity of a Judge, more rigorous than the Law directed; for he doom'd the Person to die, over and above the legal Penalty of a four-fold Restitution: When, had he turn'd his Eyes inward, he must unavoidably have seen, that it was impossible for him to restore Purity and Chastity to the Wife whom he had polluted with Adultery; or to restore Life to the Husband whom he had made an inhumane Sacrifice to his Lust.

Having thus given a full and true State of *David's* Case, and shewn the *Enormity* of his Crime, I shall from hence take Occasion to prove, that the Governors of any People, both

temporal and Spiritual, both *Princes* and *Prelates*, *Kings* and *Archbishops* are under the highest Obligation to keep themselves all that may be, free from any such foul Blemish, as that of *Adultery*, lest the Execution of their proper Office should turn to their greater Shame and Condemnation.

This is too plain to be disputed by any body; that lends the least serious Attention to it. For our *Princes* and *Prelates* are both in their several Capacities, the Ministers of God, and honoured with a Trust from him; the Trust of the *Prelate* is to declare and inculcate the Word of God, to administer sober Admonition, and sharp Reproof as there may be occasion, to win and to urge Men to their due Obedience, by setting the Tenour of the divine Promises and Threats before their Eyes, such as relate chiefly to another World; and, where all other Motives are less regarded, to call in the Severity of Discipline, as a necessary Enforcement to sound Doctrine. The Trust of the *King* is to promote the Practice of true Religion and Virtue, by human Laws, strengthen'd by temporal Sanctions, and to see the legal Penalties duly inflicted upon the Disorderly and *Licentious*.

This their respective Trust they are bound faithfully to execute, of which also they must expect to render a strict Account. And whatsoever, thro' their own voluntary Default, *in-*
disposes

disposes or unfits them for the Performance of the Duty incumbent on them, will certainly be accounted a Neglect of Duty and a Breach of Trust. And nothing can more indispose or unfit a Man for the due Discharge of the Pastoral Office, or the due Exercise of the Regal Authority, than a vitious Conversation and lewd Example.

For when Men have this visible Stain upon their Character, or know themselves to lie too open to the Suspicion, they will be under a strong Temptation, either to *decline* their Duty in each of the Respects, or at least do it very remissly, and with great Partiality and Indulgence towards *Vice*, in one kind or other. For they who are addicted to Vice themselves, can have no true Zeal to see it reformed in others, no Concern for God's Honour, no conscientious Motive to incite them to exert their proper Authority, for the Reproof or Correction of those who are under their Care or Power. But worldly Motives they will always have to Connivance and Indifference, the *Consciousness* of their own Guilt, and the *Fear* of being openly disgraced for it, will always stand, as a Lion, in the Way, to affright them from their Duty. And this very Apprehension will, for the most part, be enough to make them wholly unactive, or to disarm them of their Courage and Vigour, at least, in the Execution of the Laws
against

against *Injustice* and *Immorality*: To say the least that can be, when Men are thus conscious, they will hardly fail to shew a Tenderneſs and Indulgence towards thoſe particular Vices of which they know themſelves guilty. If *Nathan* had brought his Information directly againſt one, that had been an *Adulterer*, it is more than probable, the Senſe of Guilt and meer Shame would have quenched the Heat of the King's Zeal, to ſee another Perſon ſo ſeverely puniſhed, when he had deſerved *no leſs*, himſelf. From his real Conduct, when it appear'd to be his own Caſe, we may preſume he would have been firſt reveng'd upon himſelf, by the bittereſt Repentance, before he would have acted as a Miniſter of Vengeance againſt a Perſon guilty of the ſame Crimes with himſelf.

And as the Sound of thoſe four Syllables from the Mouth of the Prophet, *Thou art the Man*, threw King *David* into the utmoſt Confuſion, becauſe his own Heart ſmote him at the ſame Time; ſo doubtleſs the very Fear of ſuch a Recrimination would make other *vicious* Kings very backward and tender in chaſtiſing Vice, (eſpecially the *Vice* they *love* themſelves) becauſe they are ſenſible 'tis in the Power of all their Subjects to bring the Accuſation back to their own Door.

- And as this guilty Shame or Fear leaves Men who are vicious themſelves but little Spirit

rit or Inclination to be the Reprovers or Correctors of Vice in others, altho' it be the Duty of their Place and Calling, so it makes them indeed the most *unfit* Persons that can be for such a *Charge*, and the most unlikely to succeed well in the good Work. For 'tis but too natural for People, when they are taxed, tho' never so justly, with their Faults, to seek for Shelter under any Excuse they can lay hold on; and they hope to keep themselves in tolerable Countenance, if they have it but to say, that they are no worse than their Neighbours, especially if they can alledge, that their *Governors* are as bad as they; this they will be hasty enough to catch at, even perhaps when there is no Truth in it at the Bottom; but if there be, they will not fail to insist on it, as thinking it the readiest Way to divert a Prosecution, or skreen themselves from Censure. When Men, who are fond of their Sins, have such a Refuge as this, they will be apt to despise all Correction and Reproof, as being persuaded, that the *Prince* is not much in earnest, when he puts on the Brow of Authority, to threaten or reprehend those Practices in others, which he is *known* to *indulge* in himself. It will be thought sufficient to give Him back the Proverb as a seasonable *Memento*, *Physician heal thyself*.

Now altho' they who are so inexcuseable themselves, can never furnish any Excuse to others

others for transgressing the Laws of God, yet since there is so much more Force in an ill Pattern to corrupt our Nature, than there is in good Laws to reform it; and since this is so apt to be the Occasion of Men's hardening themselves in their Impenitence, it is most evident, that the Magistrate is under the strictest Obligation to support and invigorate his Authority, by a *virtuous* Example.

And without all doubt, as the Obligation of Persons so entrusted, is very strict, so their *Account* will be very *severe*, because their Offences must needs be exceedingly aggravated in the Sight of God.

For in the first Place, they whose Business it is to teach others their Duty, or to keep them within the Bounds of it, if they transgress themselves, they must do it most presumptuously, and directly against Knowledge; for they cannot reasonably be supposed to be ignorant of their own Duty; or if they be, even that will be a great Addition to their Sin, because it must proceed from a wilful Neglect. Then it must be remember'd, that the Transgressions of those who are in the Magistracy, over and above the proper Guilt of the Sins themselves, are chargeable with a *Breach of Trust*, as having, by their own Misbehaviour, *unqualified* themselves for the faithful and successful Execution of their Office; which will assuredly add to the Burden of their Account. Besides,
the

the Scandal that is given by Men in Authority affects their Authority, while it exposes their Persons, it brings the Office many Times into Contempt, and Religion itself not seldom into Question; which must needs be an Enhancement to the Guilt. For we read, 1 Sam. ii.

17. *That the Sin of the young Men was very great before the Lord, when Men* (by reason of their Vileness) *abhorred the Offering of the Lord.* Add to all this, that the ill Examples of *Magistrates* have too fatal an Influence in corrupting the Manners of the People. For as there is a great Proneness to Evil in our Nature, so Men are generally pretty apt to tread in the Steps of their Superiors, especially when they lead the same Way that their own Inclination bends. In vain shall Virtue and Religion be authoritatively taught and enjoin'd, when the Authority destroys itself, by the *immoral* and *impious* Practices of *those* who exercise it. Their Laws and Injunctions in that Case, will be but lightly regarded, but their Practices will be industriously imitated. *It must needs be that when Offences come,* such Examples will always be Snares in the Way of frail and heedless People--*but woe to THAT MAN by whom the Offence cometh.* When they, who are by Office the *Guardians* of the Law, are in Fact notorious *Law-breakers*; when the *Reprovers* of the Works of *Darkness*, are Partakers in them; when the *Shepherds*

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lead

lead their Flocks astray, and the Watchmen are the Betrayers of their Charge, how great must the Offence be, that cometh by their Means? And how strict will the Inquisition be, when God shall come to require the Blood of those Souls at their Hands? How intolerable the Punishment that they shall be doomed to, under the accumulated Load, not only of their own personal Guilt, but of all that they have been accessary to in others, of all the Wickedness that hath been propagated in the World by the Contagion of *their Examples*?

From whence and from all the foregoing Considerations, it is most apparent, that our *Magistrates* and *Governors*, as remembring the Account they must one Day give, are under the highest Obligation, to keep themselves free from such flagrant injurious Crimes as that of *Adultery*, lest the Execution of their proper Office should turn to their greater Reproach, and they should have it retorted upon them in the Words of the Apostle, *Thou that sayest (or makest Laws) that a Man should not commit ADULTERY, dost thou commit ADULTERY?*

There is now but one Particular more I shall touch on, which is, to admonish *that Man*, whoever he be, that shall fall into this grievous Sin, to recover himself by an immediate and timely Repentance: And this is suggested by King *David's* Example.

Men's

Men's principal Care, indeed, should be, to shun all flagrant and notorious Crimes, such as cannot be committed by them but in Opposition to the Light of their own Minds; because such Crimes as these lay waste the Conscience, and leave Sinners in an open Way, to proceed without Restraint, from Evil to Evil, till they have filled up the Measure of their Iniquity. That is evidently seen in the swift Progress that *David* made in Wickedness, after he had once engag'd with his *unlawful* Amour with *Bathsheba*. His first Stratagem, in respect of what follow'd, might seem to be comparatively innocent: That was only to call in the *Husband* to be the *Concealer* of the Injury and Dishonour done to his Bed, by *accompanying* with his Wife; that the Child she went with might pass for his own: But this Plot miscarrying, the King's Invention was soon at work again; the Affair being in so ill a Situation, 'twas thought the readiest Way to *get rid* of the *Husband* at once, and by that Means to secure a Property in *the Wife*. This was immediately resolved upon, and, by a base and dishonourable Contrivance, executed; and all without the least Difficulty or Scruple. For his *Conscience* had already swallow'd the *foul* Sin of *Adultery*, and therefore was not so squeemish, as to reject the bloody *Murder*, when it was judg'd serviceable to the Accomplishment of his Desires.

Of all Sins, the Habits of Uncleanness are most wretchedly enslaving and enslaving; there is none that takes a Man more out of his own Power, or sets him at a greater Distance from the Influences of Grace; and consequently leaves him more at the Mercy of the *Tempter*. *Solomon's* elegant Description of the young *Wanton*, caught in the Toil of the *subtle Harlot*, gives us so strong an Image of the Misery and Slavery of such a *Profligate*, as would move any Heart but *his*, which is grown as hard as the *Forehead* of his *graceless Companion*, to whose *Enchantments* he hath sold himself. And therefore, *he goeth after her as an Ox to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks, till a Dart strike thro' his Liver; as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.* His Folly and Shame, the Waste of his Health, Reputation and Power, the Distress of his Family, and the Lamentations of his Friends, move him not one Jot: On he goes, insensible as a Brute, hastening to see his Ruin compleated, and then at the last he begins to mourn, when his Flesh and Body are consumed; and say, *How have I hated Instruction and my Heart despised Reproof? And have not obeyed the Voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine Ear to them that instructed me? I was almost in all Evil in the midst of the Congregation and Assembly.* One of which Evils, and a very
sad

sad one it is, is that of *Family Discord* and
 Confusion. This is a sure Concomitant of *A-*
dultery. The Man that sets his *Affections* on
Strangers and *Harlots*, is soon forgetful of his
own Children and his *Father's House*. The wily
 Prostitute will never leave him, till she brings
 him over entirely to her own Schemes and Pur-
 poses, and makes him *throw off* all Regard,
 and *all Affection* for any but herself. Besides,
 the *Adulterer* being conscious that he is doing
 the utmost *Injury* to his *own Family*, and bring-
 ing the highest *Disgrace* upon them, he knows
 how justly he may *expect*, and therefore *dreads*
 their *Remonstrances* and *Complaints*; this makes
 him take hold of any Opportunity, or serve
 himself with any *Excuse* for keeping them at a
Distance from him, to prevent their *Inspection*
 of his Iniquity and bad Conduct. And so,
 to make *amends* for *abusing* them in that Respect,
 uses them *barbarously* and *unnaturally* in every
 Respect else.

Another Evil is that of *publick Discord* and
 Confusion; for if the *Adultress*, on whom the
Prince, or Governor of any People, has placed
 his Affections, should happen to have different
 Sentiments, either in *Civil* or *Religious* Mat-
 ters, from himself as well as *those* he rules o-
 ver, she will have it too much in her Power to
 corrupt the good Principles he professes, and
 for the *Maintenance* of which his Crown and
 Dignity

Dignity is supported. The fatal Consequences of which, as they have been too often seen, so they ought to be dreaded by all *future* Princes.

And indeed habitual Whoremongers and *Adulterers* do find themselves, sooner or later, drawn into almost all Evil, almost all Kind of Wickedness and Mischief, and that in the *publick View* of the People, to their lasting *Infamy*, in particular, as it happened in the Case of King *David*. I believe more *Murders* have been on account of such *criminal* Engagements, than upon any one Occasion besides. And therefore the Warning, the wise Man gives us of the *whorish Woman*, is applicable in this Sense; *Let not thine Heart decline to her Ways, go not astray in her Paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong Men have been slain by her. Her House is the Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.*

Whoever then would keep free from these many and great Transgressions, must never give himself up to the *adulterous Woman*: Or, if he has once taken the *Fire* into his Bosom, let him shake it out instantly, and so escape being *consumed* by it. And if any *Prince* or *Monarch* shall hereafter, like King *David*, be notoriously guilty of this *Royal Sin*, however great he may *think* himself, or however *positive* and obstinate he may be in other Respects, yet let him follow the *meek* King *David's* Example

ample here, in patiently submitting to *Reproof*, and *repenting* of the Evil he has done. Let him sincerely sing over the *penitential Psalm* for what is *past*, and take heed for the *future* that he sin no more ; so only can he expect the same favourable Answer, which King *David* received, *And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also has put away thy Sin, Thou shalt not die.*

T H E E N D.



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